

Amendments to the Specification:

Before page 1 line 2 please add the following new heading:

b2

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Before page 2 line 3 please insert the following heading:

b3

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2 line 5 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Accordingly ^{sub ca} [[in one non-limiting embodiment of]], the present invention [[there is provided]] provides a valve assembly comprising a reed, a port which is opened and closed by the reed, and damper means for mechanically damping motion of the reed, the damper means comprising a tube which is in communication with the port on a side of the port remote from the reed, and the tube being of such a size that, in use of the valve assembly, the tube contains a column of fluid which is sufficient [[fluid]] to provide substantial mechanical damping of the motion of [[for]] the reed.

Before page 3 line 12 please insert the following heading:

b5

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

Before page 3 line 17 please insert the following heading:

b6

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT